

Colleagues,

On Friday, December 19, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a Health Advisory, which outlines important interim recommendations for antiviral use in the U.S. for the 2008-2009 influenza season. The changes made to the current antiviral recommendations were in response to increasing evidence of oseltamivir (Tamiflu) resistance in influenza A/H1N1 viruses. Please see the attached CDC Advisory and the accompanying talking points for the complete recommendations.

Based on the new recommendations, appropriate antiviral choices are now largely dependent on which influenza virus subtypes are circulating in your area. Thus, up to date influenza surveillance data is critical. **At this time, clinicians, hospitals and laboratories are asked to submit your facility's next 3-5 positive influenza specimens to the MDCH Bureau of Laboratories for viral culture and subtyping.** These specimens will help identify which influenza viruses are circulating in Michigan and will support decision-making under the new interim recommendations. If needed, please contact MDCH Bureau of Epidemiology at 517-335-8165 for more information on specimen collection and shipping instructions. As always, the timely reporting of facility respiratory outbreaks and pediatric influenza mortalities is also highly encouraged.

Early national surveillance data indicates that, at this time, the currently circulating influenza viruses appear to be well-matched to this season's influenza vaccine. Please continue to promote influenza vaccination throughout the winter and into spring.

Please contact your local health department or the MDCH Bureau of Epidemiology at 517-335-8165 with questions or for more information.

Sincerely,

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